

Working to expand access to affordable health care and create jobs, Rep. Debbie Halvorson (IL-11) announced \$6 million in funding for Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center & Healthcare Network to construct a new Federally Qualified Health Center on Joliet's Silver Cross Hospital campus.

Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center & Healthcare Network will receive \$11.8 million, \$6 million of which will go to the Joliet location, in order to construct a new facility with 21 medical exam rooms, 9 dental rooms, and 5 behavioral health offices. Part of the funds will also go towards a new pediatric health and community wellness center in Cook County. The new Joliet health center will provide a primary health care alternative to the 72,176 non-emergency care visits to the emergency room that occurred between 2006 and 2008, and is expected to serve nearly 12,000 medical, dental and behavioral health patients under one roof in its first year.

"I speak with so many constituents every day who need greater access to affordable care. Aunt Martha's does a wonderful job throughout Illinois providing services, and I'm proud to have worked to deliver these funds for expanded health services in Joliet," said Halvorson. "This investment in our community through the Recovery Act doesn't just mean better health care, it means more jobs. Local health centers like the Community Health Center operated by Will County are so important to our community, but with a growing population, these additional services are will be a great addition to Joliet and will complement available health care options. Our community will benefit greatly from this facility, and we're going to have a healthier community because of it."

These new health facilities will serve to meet the primary health care and preventative wellness needs of one of the fastest growing population centers in Illinois. Aunt Martha's has served Illinois since 1972, and currently maintains 17 community health centers. Over 17 construction-related jobs and 26 full-time health-related jobs will be created by the project.

Raul Garza, CEO of Aunt Martha's said, "These funds are going to help put people to work in Will County and serve countless more with expanded medical, dental and behavioral health services. We're very grateful for Rep. Halvorson's advocacy for this project and for the help of countless other officials. We're looking forward to serving the community."

"Silver Cross Hospital is thrilled that Aunt Martha's received the federal funding to build a Federally Qualified Health Center on our campus. There's a great need for health care services in our community and we look forward to working with Aunt Martha's to serve the community for years to come," said Paul Pawlak, President and Chief Executive Officer of Silver Cross Hospital.

"Many thanks to Congresswoman Halvorson for her work in bringing these critical dollars to Will County. We are proud to have her in Washington fighting for Will County every day. This new facility will be a great addition to the Aunt Martha's Healthcare Network and will offer quality healthcare, dental and behavioral health services to many residents in Will County. This center will complement the Community Health Center operated by the County which also provides healthcare services to the medically underserved of our population, said Larry Walsh, Will County Executive.

Fighting on behalf of her constituents to continue bringing much needed stimulus dollars to the 11th District, Halvorson urged the Health Resources and Services Administration at the US Department of Health and Human Services to fund the project submitted by Aunt Martha's. Funding for the project is being delivered through the Halvorson-supported American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's Community Health Center Facilities Investment Program.

The new health facility will be constructed on the Silver Cross campus and will open before the hospital relocates. It is the first step in the overall campus re-development plan. The hospital will provide two years of operating support to the clinic once it is constructed.

A longtime advocate for veterans' health, Halvorson has been a leading proponent for transforming the existing location into a veterans' health facility, which would stand side-by-side with the Aunt Martha's location.